

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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R 130917Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3185

S E C R E T BEIRUT 8278

EXDIS

EO 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR LE

SUBJ: MEETING WITH PRES FRANGIE, JUL 12

1. DURING THREE HOUR PRIVATE SESSION JUL 12 WITH PRES FRANGIE AT HIS SUMMER VACATION RETREAT OF EHDEN IN LEBANON'S NORTHERN MOUNTAINS, I FOUND HIM JUST STARTING TO CATCH HIS BREATH FROM MAY FIGHTING AND SUBSEQUENT STRUGGLE OVER CABINET FORMATION. HOWEVER, HE HAS AMAZING POWERS OF RECUPERATION. HE ALREADY LOOKED RELAXED AND WAS BOTH CONFIDENT AND CHEERFUL.

2. HIS MAIN CONCERN WAS THAT THE FIGHTING IN BEIRUT THIS SPRING MAY HAVE BEEN ONLY THE PRELIMINARY TO A MAJOR BOUT LATER ON. HE SAID INTERNECINE WARFARE GOING ON BETWEEN FATAH AND SAIQA, WITH BOTH TRYING TAKE CONTROL OF ENTIRE FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT AND FEARED IF GOING GOT ROUGH EITHER SIDE MIGHT PROVOKE CONFRONTATION WITH GOL TO RESTORE PALESTINIAN UNITY. HE DOUBTS SYRIA WOULD INTERVENE OVERTLY BUT IS CONCERNED THEY MIGHT DO SO UNDER PALESTINIAN COVER, E.G., YARMUK BRIGADE.

3. I INFORMED PRES OF WIDESPREAD ADMIRATION AND SUPPORT FOR HIM OBSERVED DURING MY RECENT WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS, WHICH HE MUCH APPRECIATED.

4. HIS CONCERN AT NEED TO STRENGTHEN ARMY'S CAPABILITIES REFLECTED IN HIS STATED INTENTION CONTINUE USING AUTHORITY

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TO CALL UP RESERVES TO ADD ABOUT 3,000 YOUNG MEN ON SHORT TERM

BASIS.

5. HE WAS LIKEWISE GRATIFIED AT DECISION TO PERMIT SALE OF A4'S AND TO DISCUSS PRICE AND AVAILABILITY DATA ON TANKS AND ARTILLERY. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY NOT BRIEFED ON DETAILS AND ASKED THAT SPECIFICS BE PURSUED WITH LEB DEFENSE DEPT, WHICH WE WILL NOW DO. (I AM VERY GRATEFUL FOR TIMELY DISPATCH DEPTTEL 136029 THIS SUBJ).

6. FRANGIE MADE FOL OBSERVATIONS ON MAY HOSTILITIES:

A) HE WAS ELATED AT UNITY, COURAGE AND ELAN OF LEB ARMY.

B) WAS ALSO MOST GRATIFIED THAT NO SIGNIFICANT CONFESSIONAL SPLIT DEVELOPED DURING FIGHTING. SUCH TENDENCIES APPEARED ONLY AFTERWARDS, AND THEN LARGELY AS RESULT MANEUVERINGS BY SUCH OPPORTUNISTIC (HIS WORD) POLITICANS AS JUMBLATT.

C) ATTITUDE OF SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT PERFECTLY "CORRECT" AND WHILE JORDAN UNABLE TAKE MORE PROMINENT PUBLIC STAND LEST IT BE ACCUSED OF JOINING IN "CONSPIRACY" TO COMPLETELY LIQUIDATE FEDAYEEN, HE WAS FULLY SATISFIED WITH PRIVATE SUPPORT (INCLUDING MATERIEL) FROM HUSSEIN.

D) ALL OTHER ARAB REACTION DISAPPOINTING (WITH THEIR REPS TELLING HIM ONE THING AND TELLING FEDAYEEN ANOTHER). THIS PARTICULARLY TRUE OF SYRIA WHO HE BELIEVED HAD REALLY CLOSED BORDER TO KEEP PALESTINIANS FROM RETURNING THERE. KHADAFI SEEMS ABOUT READY FOR THE INSANE ASYLUM AND IS STILL STIRRING UP TROUBLE IN LEBANON BY BUYING SUPPORT FROM CERTAIN SUNNI LEADERS (THOUGH THE MUFTI, HE WAS GRATIFIED TO REPORT, REFUSED TO PLAY THIS GAME.)

E) SOVIET ROLE PROBABLY HELPFUL WITH SOME EVIDENCE (UNSPECIFIED) OF RESTRAINING INFLUENCE ON DAMASCUS.

F) LEB ECONOMY SURVIVED MUCH BETTER THAN WOULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED. LEB POUND REMAINED VERY FIRM AND EVEN IN JUNE CUSTOMS RECEIPTS WERE UP SHARPLY.

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7. I CONGRATULATED HIM ON SUCCESS IN FORMING CABINET WITH BROADLY BASED SUPPORT. HE SHOWED LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR FINAL GROUPING, WHICH, I BELIEVE, TENDS TO CONFIRM REPORTS THAT HE HAD MADE CONCESSIONS HE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO AVOID AND THAT HE DOESN'T REALLY EXPECT NEW GOVT TO ACCOMPLISH MUCH.

8. FRANGIE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT FRONTIER WITH SYRIA

WOULD BE OPENED SOON. HOWEVER, HE DID NOT CONCLUDE  
SYRIANS WOULD DO THIS MERELY FOR LEBANON BUT, RATHER,  
TO STIMULATE ATTENDANCE AT THE DAMASCUS FAIR OPENING NEXT  
MONTH.  
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